

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended. Support for the amendment to the claim may be found, for example, in the figures. No new matter is added.

In view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

I. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

In particular, with respect to claim 1, the Office Action asserts that the feature "penetrated in an axial direction" is unclear. Furthermore, the Office Action asserts that it is unclear whether the circulation holes are through the partition walls or whether the circulation holes are separated by the partition walls. By this Amendment, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the circulation holes are "defined by partition walls" and "said circulation holes penetrated in an axial direction" in order to more clearly recite and distinctly claim the subject matter.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Office rejects claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent No. JP A 2000-007455 to Takashi et al. ("Takashi"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 recites: A bonding method of a ceramic honeycomb structure formed by bundling a plurality of porous honeycomb segments through adhesive layers, where the

porous honeycomb segments are provided with numerous circulation holes defined by partition walls and said circulation holes penetrated in an axial direction, wherein the respective pieces of the porous honeycomb segments are stacked while interposing the adhesive layers between respective adhered surfaces, and the porous honeycomb segments are bonded together by performing main pressurization on the whole through the porous honeycomb segments located on an outermost layer after stacking a predetermined number of pieces. Emphasis added. Such a bonding method is not taught by Takashi.

The Office Action asserts that Takashi discloses collectively joining honeycomb filter wafers with an average pore diameter of 10 micrometers and through tubes 2 separated by walls 3 after joining all of the honeycomb filter wafers and incorporating adhesive layers 8 by applying thrust. However, Takashi discloses a method of applying pressure that is performed by "supplying pressurization to vibrator 44 and it is the field S1 pasted up between predetermined time. Direction A2 shifted mutually vibration is given. Then pasted up filed S1 adhesives 8 are then pasted up fields S1 by vibration given while adhesives 8 which intervened in between are crushed by thrust" *See* computer-generated translation of Takashi at paragraph [0058]. Takashi does not disclose the bonding of porous honeycomb segments performed by main pressurization on the whole through the porous honeycomb segments located on an outmost layer after stacking a predetermined number of pieces, as required by claim 1.

Furthermore, the present specification at page 3 lines 22 describes the problems that may occur with using the method specifically disclosed in Takashi. The claimed invention is directed to improving the conventional method, disclosed in Takashi, by providing a bonding method that is capable of maintaining adhesive layers for bonding respective porous honeycomb segments in an original state of stacking irrespective of the order of stacking the respective honeycomb segments, and thereby bonding the whole segments uniformly at

desired adhesive strength. According to the claimed invention, the main pressurization force is simultaneously applied to all the honeycomb segments through the porous honeycomb segments located on the outermost layer after stacking the predetermined number of the porous honeycomb segments, and the main pressurization force does not act as a separating force against any of the honeycomb segments.

Thus, Takashi does not disclose all of the features of the claimed invention and, thus does not anticipate claim 1. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

III. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 2 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Takashi in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,115,178 to Cone et al. ("Cone"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

For the reasons discussed above, Takashi fails to teach all the features of claim 1. Likewise, Takashi also fails to suggest modifying its disclosed different process so as to practice the claimed invention. Cone is cited only for limitations of dependant claims 2 and 3. Regardless of its asserted disclosures, Cone does not cure the deficiency of Takashi. Therefore, Takashi and Cone, considered either separately or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all of the features of independent claim 1.

Claim 1 would not have been rendered obvious by Takashi and Cone. Claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 1 and, thus, also would not have been rendered obvious by Takashi and Cone. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-3 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


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